Weetslade Urban District Council.

REPORTS

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Sanitary Inspector.

FOR THE YEAR 1921.

MORPETH:
Printed by J. & J. S. Mackay, Bridge Street.

1922.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b30242769

WEETSLADE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1921.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE WEETSLADE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report dealing with the Health and Sanitory Condition of your district during the year 1921.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

The area of the district is 2257. 837 acres, and the population at the Census of 1921 was 6,957. The population as estimated by the Registrar-General is 7,080, at 30th June, 1921.

The district is flat and low-lying, and therefore is not an easy one to keep in a satisfactory state of sanitation.

The majority of the inhabitants are engaged in the coal-mining industry, but a small number are engaged in agriculture.

Water Supply.—The whole district receives an ample supply of pure water from the mains of the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company. The stand-pipe system of distribution is chiefly in use in the district, but a separate service for each dwelling is now required for all new houses.

There are four shallow wells in private use in the district.

Drainage and Sewerage. — The houses in Dudley and Annitsford are drained into the Annitsford Irrigation Grounds. The houses in Seaton Burn Village are drained into the Irrigation Grounds there; and the sewage from Hazelrigg and Wideopen is dealt with at modern Sewage Disposal Works at Wideopen.

I have been over the last-mentioned works on several occasions and am quite satisfied with their efficiency.

The Seaton Burn, which passes through the district, receives the effluent from the two irrigation grounds; and, in addition, crude sewage from Telfer's Buildings, Dudley; and Trewick's Buildings, Annitsford.

During the summer months many children use the pool opposite the Council Room for bathing, and, as this is the only facility afforded for open-air bathing in the district, I would ask you to consider the possibility of cleansing this pool now and then, so that the youth of the district could enjoy the benefit of open-air bathing with greater satisfaction.

I can see no valid objection to bathing in this pool, as the effluent leaves the irrigation grounds in a wonderfully clean condition, and traverses a long course before reaching Dudley.

I am informed that, prior to the War, a scheme was under consideration for dealing in a modern and comprehensive manner with the sewage from Seaton Burn, Dudley and Annitsford, and I hope that you will soon be able to carry out this very necessary work.

Closet Accomodation and Scavenging.—Full particulars of this department will be found in the report of your Sanitary Inspector.

During the year three privy middens were converted to ash-closets, and two were replaced by water-closets.

I regret to inform you that there are still a large number of privy middens in your district which are not in a satisfactory condition, mainly due to structural defects.

Slaughter - Houses.—There are now three licensed slaughter-houses in the district,—one in Dudley and one in Seaton Burn.

The wooden building used as a slaughter-house at Annitsford has now been replaced by a satisfactory modern building, in the Seghill area.

All are in a sanitary condition.

Cowsheds and Dairies.—These have all been inspected and found satisfactory.

Workshops, Etc.—There are eight workshops in the district, three joiners shops, two blacksmiths' shops, one tailor's shop, and three dressmakers' rooms. All have been inspected and found satisfactory

I have inspected the Dudley Bakery on several occasions and found it in a satisfactory condition.

There are no factories and no "out-workers" in the district.

Housing.—There have been four new houses erected during the year—three at Seaton Burn and one at Wideopen

None of the projected Council Houses had been erected at the end of 1921, but the work is now going on and we expect to have one hundred new houses in occupation before the close of 1922.

There are still many houses in the district which fall very short of even moderately satisfactory sanitary conditions, but, owing to the impossibility of obtaining alternative accommodation for the tenants, we have been unable to do very much in the way of improvement.

You will find a full account of the work done in this direction, in the report of your Sanitary Inspector.

We have done our utmost against appalling difficulties, and sincerely hope that in the near future we will be able to show a more staisfactory state of affairs.

About one-half of the houses in the district are old, some sixty years or more, and are of a very unsatisfactory type.

There are many floors irregularly paved, walls and floors are damp, ventilation is conspicuous by its absence, and there are still a large number of back-to-back houses.

Nearly all the old houses have low attic bedrooms, badly lighted, and reached by ladders.

This applies mainly to "free" colliery houses, and, although some improvements have been lately instituted, there still remains a great deal of work to be done.

I regret to report that the Coal Company are still carrying out their proposed improvements in a very dilatory manner.

Even when the new houses have been erected and occupied, there will still be far too much overcrowding; there are no vacant houses, and married sons and daughters have, in many cases, to continue living with their parents, thus aggravating conditions already bad.

Forty-four per cent. of the houses are tenements of one or two rooms, and only 26 % have four rooms or more.

Rents, which were already far too high before the War, have now reached such a pitch that their cost forms a very considerable proportion of the weekly expenditure. Naturally, this reflects on the health of the district, and I am constantly meeting cases of debility caused by insufficient nourishment.

Sanitary Administration.—A statement of the work done by your Inspector of Nuisances is appended.

Infectious Diseases.—There were notified to me only 24 cases of Infectious Disease during the year 1921. This is the lowest number on record, with the notable exception of 1917, when only 22 cases occurred.

Considering the average sanitary condition of the district, this can only be regarded as a phenomenally healthy year.

Particulars of the varieties of disease and the incidence of disease in the various districts, will be found in the attached tabular statement.

It is interesting to note the comparative freedom from infectious disease enjoyed by Dudley.

Tuberculosis.—There were only four new cases of Pulmonary Tubercle reported in 1921, and seven non-pulmonary cases.

There are a number of chronic cases in the district; most of these cases have had one or more periods of treatment in various sanatoria. They show some improvement under suitable conditions, but, with few exceptions, rapidly relapse on returning to their normal home life. The satisfactory treatment of these chronic cases is a very difficult problem; one would like to do more for these unfortunate people, but, under our present social conditions, a succession of short periods of Sanatorium Treatment appears the only available means of ameliorating their lot.

Much remains to be learned about Tuberculosis, but I would like to assure you, gentlemen, that money expended on Sanatoria is money well spent. After all, you are the guardians of the public, and it is your duty to do all in your power to help to overcome the scourge.

VITAL STATISTICS.

211 births were registered in the district during 1921, and the birth-rate is 30.12 per 1,000 of the population. This shows a decrease of nearly five per 1,000 as against last year.

Of the children born, 116 were male and 95 female. There were five illegitimate births, two less than last year. Three illegitimate children died during the year.

The number of deaths registered was 102, as against 88 last year, giving the death-rate of 14.51 per 1,000.

Infantile Mortality.—I regret to inform you that there has been a very considerable increase in the number of deaths occurring in infants under the age of 12 months. The number of infant deaths this year is 33, as against 24 last year. This is a very serious matter, and I have devoted much time to a careful analysis of the causes of this unduly high rate of infantile mortality. I find that 14 deaths are certified to be due to Premature Birth or Congenital Debility; this simply shows that increased care must be given to expectant mothers, and I am endeavouring to attain this object with the able and willing help of the District Nurses and Health Visitors.

Another distressing factor is that 13 infant deaths were associated with Convulsions as a terminal cause. The occurrence of convulsions in infancy is frequent, and, apart from definite meningitis, not always easily accounted for. I fear that too often these attacks are regarded as a regrettable fact impossible of explanation, while the compete ignorance of simple, homely treatment is very noticeable in the mothers of this district

I would ask you to support any movement made by the County Council to promote, by lectures or otherwise, the education of young married women in Child Welfare.

The remaining deaths are accounted for by the usual common diseases of infancy: Pneumonia, Bronchitis, Whooping Cough, and Enteritis.

We are faced with an Infantile Mortality of over 164 per 1,000 births, and we must use every effort to reduce this extraordinary loss of infant life.

It is only right to remind you that these deaths occurred in an abnormal year, when there was great industrial unrest, 13 weeks' stoppage of the coal mines, followed by a very serious fall in the earnings of the majority of the workers of the district. These factors

undoubtedly reacted unfavourably on the mothers of the district, and, through them, on the younger infants and children yet unborn.

I will conclude with the sincere hope that the excellent houses you are now erecting and the prospect of more regular working of the mines, will very soon bring about a marked improvement in the health of your district.

THEODORE CRAIG,

M.B., Ch.B.; F.R.S.M.E., &c.

Dudley, S O., Northumberland.
May, 1922.

Table I.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Year.	Estimated Population for Birth Rate.	Estimated Population for Death Rate.	Births.		Deaths. Under 1 year of age.		Deaths. At all ages.	
			Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate
1916	6682	6141	215	32·17	18	83·7	88	14·7
1917	—	—	177	25·3	25	141·2	83	13·2
1918	6836	6101	173	25·3	15	86·6	107	17·1
1919	6924	6647	173	24·9	21	121·3	108	16·2
1920	6912	6912	244	35·30	24	98·36	88	12·73
1921	7080	7080	211	30·12	33	164·5	102	14·5

TABLE II.

Causes of Death. Year 1921.

Causes of Death. (Civilians Only.)	Males.	Females.
All Causes	61	41
Enteric Fever		
Small-pox		
Measles		
Scarlet Fever		
Whooping Cough	2	6
Diphtheria	1	
Influenza		
Encephalitis Lethargica		
Meningococcal Meningitis		
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ...	1	
Other Tuberculous Diseases	1	3
Cancer, Malignant Disease	3	3
Rheumatic Fever		
Diabetes	1	
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, &c.	5	3
Heart Disease	3	2
Arterio-Scelerosis	3	1
Bronchitis	9	6
Pneumonia (all forms)	5	1
Other Respiratory Diseases		
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum ...		
Diarrhœa, &c. (under 2 years)	3	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis		
Cirrhosis of Liver		1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	2	2
Puerperal Sepsis		
Other Accidents aud Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition		1
Congenital Debility and Malformation, Premature Birth	9	3
Suicide		
Other Deaths from Violence	4	
Other Defined Diseases	9	8
Causes, ill defined or unknown		

TABLE III.—Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1921.

Notifiable Disease.	Number of Cases Notified.								Total cases notified in each locality. (*e.g.* Parish or Ward).							Total Cases removed to Hospital.
	At all ages.	At Ages—Years.							1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	
		Under 1.	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 years and upwards.	Dudley.	Seaton Burn.	Annitsford.	Hazelrigg and Wideopen.				
Small-pox																
Cholera, Plague																
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup)...	8		3	5					2	6						
Erysipelas	1							1	1							
Scarlet Fever	10			9	1				4	1	2	3				3
Typhus Fever																
Enteric Fever																
Relapsing Fever } ...	1					1			1							
Continued Fever } ...																
Puerperal Fever																
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis																
Poliomyelitis																
Ophthalmia Neonatorum																
Pulmonary Tuberculosis...	4			1	1	1	1			2	2					
Other forms of Tuberculosis ...	7	1	2	2	1	1				2	1	4				
Acute Pneumonia ...	3		1	2						2		1				
Influenzal Pneumonia ...	1						1					1				
Totals...	35	1	6	19	3	3	2	1	8	13	5	9				3

Isolation Hospital or Hospitals, Sanatoria, etc. } Gosforth, Newburn, and Castle Ward Joint Hospital, which is situated outside the district.

WEETSLADE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Statistics of Housing Conditions. Year Ended 31st Dec., 1921.

1. GENERAL.

Estimated Population	7080
General Death-rate	14.51
Death-rate from Tuberculosis	0.75
Infantile Mortality	164.65
Number of Dwelling-houses of all classes	1493
Number of Working-class Dwelling-houses	1457
Number of Working-class Houses erected	4

2. UNFIT DWELLING-HOUSES.

1. Inspection.

Total Number of Dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts	277
Number of Dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	50
Number of Dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	11
Number of Dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	56

2. Remedy of Defects without service of Formal Notices.

Number of Defective Dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal notice by the Local Authority or their Officers	48

3. Action under Statutory Powers.

A. Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Panning, &c., Act, 1919.

(1.) Number of Dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil.
(2.) Number of Dwelling-houses which were rendered fit (a) by owners	Nil.
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	Nil.

(3) Number of Dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declaration of owners of intention to close Nil.

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of Dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 83

(2) Number of Dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied

(a) by owners 72

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners Nil.

C. Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning &c., Act, 1909 Nil.

3. UNHEALTHY AREAS..... Nil

4. Number of Houses not complying with the Building Bye-laws erected with consent of the Local Authority under Section 25 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919 Nil.

5. Staff engaged on Housing Work ...

M.O.H. (part-time)

INSPECTOR of NUISANCES.

WEETSLADE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Surveyor's and Inspector of Nuisances' Annual Report.

May, 1922.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE WEETSLADE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1921.

New Buildings.—There have been four houses erected during the year,—three at Seaton Burn and one at Wideopen. Three of these houses drain into cesspools owing to the inadequate system of sewerage which prevails in this part of the district.

Private Street Works Act, 1892.—Under the above Act nothing has been done in the way of making up New Streets.

Sewerage.—The Sewers have been free from any serious defects, and the 12in. sewer from Dudley to Annitsford has given no trouble during the year. The new sewerage system in contemplation in 1914 is still in abeyance.

Sewage Disposal.—The Outfall Works at Wideopen have worked very well, and the effluent has been of a satisfactory character.

Seaton Burn Irrigation Grounds.—These Grounds have been worked by a "full-time" man and are as satisfactory as possible under existing conditions.

Annitsford Irrigation Grounds.—Little or no alterations have been carried out at these grounds. Considerable improvement has been effected since the new manager commenced his duties.

Scavenging.—With the exception of Wideopen and Hazelrigg district, the Scavenging was carried out by the Council's own employees, and the improvement over the old contract system has been well maintained. The average cost of scavenging was 15.96s. per house.

Lighting.—The whole of your district is lighted by gas supplied by the Newcastle and Gateshead Gas Company. The number of lamps erected is 167, comprised of the following types:—10 Hutchinson; 40 No. 3 Kern; 29 2-light Sugg; 12 3-light Sugg; 71 150 c.p.; 5 300 c.p.

Before the commencement of next lighting season, I am of opinion the Council should take into serious consideration the question of converting the whole of the street lamps to Sugg Burners, as a considerable saving would be effected by standardising, and the Sugg lamps have proved themselves to be both efficient and economical.

The cost of lighting during the season was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Cost of Gas	201	19	3	Cost per lamp	1	4	2
, , Maintenance	131	5	4	,, ,, ,,	0	15	9
, , Labour ...	138	12	1	,, ,, ,,	0	16	7
	£471	16	8		£2	16	6

Conveniences.—During the year five Privy Ashpits were abolished, being replaced by two w.c.'s and three ash-closets; ten ash-closets were replaced by w.c.'s.

Waterworks.—Part of your district is supplied direct by the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company, viz., Hazelrigg, and part of Wideopen. The remainder of the district is supplied by the same Company through meters. During the year five additional stand-posts were erected at Seaton Burn, and one at Dudley.

The consumption of water for domestic use in the several districts has been as follows:—

Dudley and Annitsford, 20,119,000 gallons (average consumption per head per day, 13.00 gallons.)

Seaton Burn & Wideopen, 7,898,000 gallons (average consumption per head per day, 9.89 gallons.)

Total for domestic purposes, 28,017,000 gallons.

The average consumption per head per day on the whole district is 11.94 gallons.

The total consumption of water for all purposes in the district has been 35,328,000 gallons.